Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area

SERVICE PLAN

2003/04 to 2005/06

Stephen Bullock, Chair, Management Authority

DEC 15/02

Date approved

1.1 Organization Overview

Summary description of organization

Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area - The Legacy

The CVWMA is situated along the Kootenay River between the Selkirk and Purcell mountains, near the Town of Creston, BC. It was born out of the sustained commitment and enthusiasm of a handful of persistent conservationists, biologists and Creston Valley residents who recognized the importance of Duck Lake and the adjoining wetlands as critical wildlife habitat, especially for nesting and migratory waterfowl. In 1942 they began what would be 26 years of struggle with friends, neighbours, powerful organizations, businesses and government ministries to prevent the loss of this irreplaceable wildlife habitat to drainage for agricultural expansion, and water level fluctuation for hydro-electric developments. They never lost sight of their goal of having this precious wetland area reserved and maintained for wildlife conservation, and in 1968 their efforts were finally rewarded - the Creston Valley Wildlife Act was proclaimed and the habitat, at last, secured.

With the help of Ducks Unlimited and BC Hydro, work then began constructing a system of dykes, control structures, and pumps. This created a series of managed wetland compartments to manage flood and drought cycles in a manner which would enhance wildlife production and prevent the loss of wildlife use that would otherwise occur because of the changed management of the Kootenay River system for hydro-electric power generation and flood control.

Management of the water levels within these compartments acts to maintain a rich diversity of habitat. As a result the CVWMA is now noted for supporting a current count of 286 species of birds, 56 species of mammals, and 28 species of fish, reptiles, and amphibians. There are thousands of species of invertebrates, and several hundred species of plants. More than 60 species of birds, animals and plants are identified as rare or endangered. So rich and diverse is this area, that in 1994 the governments of Canada and British Columbia jointly sponsored and successfully achieved the official designation of this area as a Ramsar site – a wetland of accredited international significance – under the international Ramsar Convention on wetland conservation.

Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area - The Organization

The Creston Valley Wildlife Act establishes the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area as a legal entity, and the Management Authority as the governing body responsible for the ongoing management of the area. The Management Authority is comprised of:

- a provincial member appointed by the BC Minister of Water, Land, and Air Protection,
- a federal member appointed by the Minister of Environment Canada, and
- a public member appointed by the BC Minister of Water, Land, and Air Protection, if that minister so chooses

Management of the CVWMA is therefore a uniquely cooperative effort involving not only two levels of government but also the public. The Management Authority puts its management responsibility into effect through the Area Manager, and a small complement of staff who have the delegated authority to manage the day to day affairs of operating the CVWMA. Their work in turn is supported through seasonal and contract employees, and a pool of energetic and committed volunteers.

Primary business activities/core services

Without management, the 12,000 acres of wetlands within the CVWMA would be lost, because Kootenay River levels have been affected by the construction of dams. Endangered species depend on these wetlands. The habitat management work funded by grants directly benefits endangered species, and the countless other species, which are fortunately still at healthy population levels.

The CVWMA fulfils an important role in government responsibility towards both endangered and non-endangered species.

The overall product and service – the provision of a world-class, internationally-accredited wetland – can be more specifically described as follows:

Conservation, management and development of the 17,000-acre wildlife management area:

- to maintain diverse wetlands which could otherwise not exist under present Kootenay River management regimes
- for a range of diverse habitats supporting a diversity of species
- to safeguard endangered and imperilled species which depend on the CVWMA
- to maintain international designations under the RAMSAR Convention and the Important Bird Area programs

Provision of public education and information:

- to expand and share knowledge about the CVWMA, its wildlife species, and wetlands, through educational programs, public information, and visitor services at the Creston Valley Wildlife Centre

In summary, our business activity, product and service is our

- habitat
- infrastructure
- wildlife
- facilities
- programs

Enabling legislation

The Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA) is a 7,000 ha (17,000 acre) area of provincial Crown land that has been set aside and reserved under the Creston Valley Wildlife Act for the purpose of "wildlife conservation, management and development, and . . . in particular as a waterfowl management area".

Mandate

Our mandate is the specific responsibility that has been formally delegated to us. It defines what we must do. What we must do is enabled by the legislation (see above); how we do it is constrained by legal obligations, agreements, and other legislation (see below).

Enabling: Our mandate is derived from British Columbia's Creston Valley Wildlife Act. Through it we have been delegated legal authority to manage the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, a 7,000 ha (17,000 acre)

area of provincial Crown land located along the Kootenay River system in proximity to the Town of Creston, British Columbia.

> ***We must*** . . . put into effect and uphold the spirit and intent of the Creston Valley Wildlife Act and any regulations enacted under that Act in our management of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area. Specifically, we must maintain and develop the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area for the purpose of "wildlife conservation, management and development . . . and, in particular, as a waterfowl management area" [see s. 7(1), and s. 2(1) of the Creston Valley Wildlife Act].

Constraining: The way in which we deliver our primary mandate is shaped by various legal obligations that set conditions and constraints. Most notable among these is the international Ramsar Convention on wetland conservation, to which the Government of Canada is a signatory, and under which the Government of Canada, in partnership with the Province of British Columbia, successfully sponsored the nomination of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area as a wetland site of international significance.

> ***We must*** . . . manage the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area in a manner that maintains those values which make the area a wetland of international significance and preserves its status as a designated Ramsar site under the Ramsar Convention on wetland conservation.

Further, ***we must*** . . . work within the regulatory framework, contracts, and agreements which guide our actions and decisions as we carry out our business of managing the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, including, but not limited to:

- BC Wildlife Act
- BC Dyke Maintenance Act
- Canada Migratory Bird Convention Act
- Canada Fisheries Act
- Canada Wildlife Act
- Canada Navigable Waters Protection Act
- Duck Lake Dyking District Agreement
- International Joint Commission Order
- Ducks Unlimited Agreement
- Canada Income Tax Act
- BC Financial Administration Act
- BC Budget Transparency and Accountability Act
- BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- employment legislation / labour standards
- permits, agreements, contracts (terms and conditions)

1.2 Strategic Context

Vision

Our vision is a description of the organization we strive to become. Our actions and decisions will lead us in this direction as we transform into our envisioned future state.

We envision ourselves as . . .

• ***Financially secure.*** We forge and perpetuate partnerships which offer value to our partners and collectively give us the financial stability we need to concentrate on managing the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area for wildlife conservation, species diversity, scientific study, education, interpretation, recreation, use and enjoyment.

• ***Supported by the public.*** We reach out to, and serve, a global community, and as a result enjoy strong support from the public for the wildlife conservation work we do, the knowledge we gain, the information we share, the public programs we offer, and the facilities we provide.

• ***Vigilant guardians.*** We are mindful of the impassioned struggle which led to the creation of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, and we are vigilant guardians and managers of the richly diverse landscape with which we have been entrusted, so we can pass on a lasting and inspiring legacy of wildlife conservation to future generations.

• ***Effective Managers.*** We are specialists in the management of habitat and species; our efforts contribute to species diversity and the restoration of threatened or endangered native species.

• ***Resourceful.*** We are creative in our thinking, adaptable in our methods, collegial in our actions, and prudent in our utilization of the financial and human resources through which our work is accomplished.

Mission

Our mission describes the fundamental purpose of our organization. It is the reason we exist.

> ***We exist to. . .*** manage the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area – a 7,000 ha (17,000 acre) wetland of international significance – for conservation and natural species diversity through active habitat and wildlife management, research, education and public support.

Values

Our values are important to us. They are the fundamental principles which guide our decision, actions and behaviours as we carry out our work managing the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area.

We believe in:

• ***Responsible Stewardship.*** We embrace our legal obligation to be wise stewards and responsible, accountable managers of the rich natural heritage and diverse landscapes that comprise the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area – carrying forward a legacy of wildlife conservation.

• ***Fiscal Prudence.*** We are efficient and effective in our utilization of the limited, hard earned, financial resources through which our work is accomplished.

• ***Building Partnerships.*** We build strong partnerships by being a good neighbour and by treating our funding partners and volunteers with respect, providing them opportunities to derive value from their association with the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area.

• ***Education and Awareness.*** We are passionate in our efforts to expand our knowledge about the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, its biota and the results of our management actions, and equally passionate about sharing the knowledge we gain – creating a vibrant outdoor living classroom.

• ***Quality Work Environment.*** We establish and maintain a high quality work environment, where creativity and innovation are encouraged, individuals are treated with respect and dignity, and people work collegially and cooperatively to achieve common goals.

Planning context and key strategic issues

Funding History

When the CVWMA was originally established, the cost of operating the area was shared between the governments of Canada and British Columbia. Their funding supported all maintenance and operating costs, equipment purchases, habitat management activities and approximately 7 full-time staff positions. In addition to this funding arrangement, in the mid-1970's the Canadian Wildlife Service constructed the Wildlife Centre from which it operated year round public information, education and interpretation programs through its own staff of approximately 6 full time positions.

So things continued for nearly a decade, until in the mid-1980's the Canadian Wildlife Service withdrew from operating the Wildlife Centre, prompting the Management Authority to take on the facilities and programs. Despite the departure of the Canadian Wildlife Service from Wildlife Centre operations, funding continued for another decade under the original cost shared arrangement between the federal and provincial governments without a commensurate increase to offset the additional financial burden assumed by the Management Authority.

In 1993, just as the CVWMA was about to receive its prestigious Ramsar designation, the federal government, faced with public pressure to reduce the mounting deficit and cut spending, trimmed back its share of funding. The following year the province followed suit. After two years of federal and provincial funding cutbacks, in 1995 the Government of Canada withdrew completely its financial support for the CVWMA, and the Government of British Columbia countered by chopping its funding to half its original commitment, throwing the CVWMA into a financial crisis.

For the next two years operation of the CVWMA and the Wildlife Centre teetered at the edge of financial ruin and abandonment. Only through local action was the CVWMA spared from closure. In March 1997, spearheaded by BC Hydro, a group of concerned corporate leaders, citizens and ardent supporters formed the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area Working Group (Working Group). The Working Group set for itself three goals: first to secure emergency funding to stave off the impending closure of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, second to obtain a bridging solution to annual financial crises, and third to find a long-term funding solution.

During 1997 the Working Group achieved its first goal by raising over $135,000, which the Government of British Columbia met with a matching grant, to keep the CVWMA open for yet another year. The second goal was achieved in April 1998 when a bridging solution was secured in the amount of $300,000 per year from BC Hydro at the direction of the British Columbia Ministry of Employment and Investment. This money is to be provided each year until the CVWMA is financially self sufficient through its own fund generating efforts. The Working Group met its third goal in 1999, when it recommended the CVWMA solve its long-term funding requirements by focusing on building its endowment fund (already established with the Vancouver Foundation) to a value where the BC Hydro annual grant can be replaced by interest income generated from the endowment fund (requiring a fund investment of approximately $6 million). The Working Group also recommended establishment of a board of directors to spearhead this major fund-raising effort.

Key Strategic Issue

As a result of the withdrawal of Government of Canada and Government of British Columbia funding, the CVWMA has been handed a challenge of significant proportion. The CVWMA, if it is to continue to survive, must successfully make the transition from operating like a government agency supported by government funding, to one of operating like a not-for-profit organization responsible for generating its own funds. The ongoing annual operating grants from BC Hydro and a supplementary grant from the Town of Creston are thankfully helping to bridge the gap and make this transition possible.

1.3 Goals, Objectives, Key Strategies, Performance Measures and Targets

To achieve our Vision, the major thrusts of our organization over the next five (5) years will be:

A. Habitat / Wildlife Management: • to maintain species and habitat diversity

B. Public Outreach: • to extend the reach and impact of public programs and marketing

C. Fund Development: • to enhance and expand fund development efforts and work towards building the endowment fund as the long-term funding solution

D. Business Processes: • to revitalize the organization and improve its preparedness for fund development

Goals and/or objectives

The results that we expect to achieve in each of these four (4) areas of strategic priority have been further defined and expressed in terms of 13 specific and measurable goals:

A Habitat / Wildlife Management Goals

To maintain habitat and species diversity we will . . .

A1 ***Re-establish by the end of 2005 habitat management and monitoring programs, specifically:***

a) a regular ongoing program of active habitat management to improve habitat conditions and keep them in an optimal state for wildlife use and production, and

b) a comprehensive program for the systematic monitoring of wildlife habitat, wildlife populations, and human use levels to be better able to measure and assess the effects of management efforts and identify opportunities for habitat and wildlife management improvements.

A2 ***Upgrade and or replace aging habitat management infrastructure*** (dykes, gates, culverts, pumps etc.) and field equipment on a priority basis **by the end of 2005** to maintain infrastructure and equipment in a sound condition and avoid the disastrous effects of sudden habitat loss, and the significant problems and costs that would ensue from infrastructure and/or equipment failure.

A3 ***Develop a list of research priorities*** **by the end of 2003** to be used as a basis from which to encourage Universities, other organizations or individuals to design, implement and fund research projects that would lead to improvements in habitat management and wildlife conservation, or contribute to scientific knowledge about the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area.

B Public Outreach Goals

To extend Public Outreach we will . . .

B1 ***Increase visitation to the Wildlife Centre*** **to 13,500/yr by the end of 2005**, with special emphasis on the shoulder seasons of May, September and October while maintaining current levels of visitation during the peak summer season of June, July and August in order to build a broader base of awareness, appreciation and support for the CVWMA, and its habitat management and wildlife conservation work.

B2 ***Continue to operate educational programs*** **at capacity levels on an ongoing basis**, ensuring programs provide a quality educational experience and support the changing curriculum requirements of schools and colleges

B3 ***Maintain a market research function*** in order to ensure limited marketing resources are targeted to the most promising market segments in a manner that yields optimum impact and effect in terms of visitation and support.

B4 ***Make improvements to public facilities*** (boardwalks, bridges, Wildlife Centre building, etc) on a priority basis **by the end of 2003** to ensure public facilities are maintained in a clean, safe condition.

C Fund Development Goals

To enhance Fund Development we will . . .

C1 ***Expand donor support*** **from a donor base of 700 to 2,000 by the end of 2005**

C2 ***Increase the amount of annual donor support*** to $100,000/yr by the end of 2005 to be able to pay for deferred habitat / wildlife management work, essential upcoming capital upgrade and replacement projects, and enhanced educational programs and visitor facilities.

C3 ***Build the endowment fund*** **from a current balance of $100,000 to a total value of $6 million, with an interim goal of $2 million by the end of 2005**, to provide a sound base of financial security and ensure the CVWMA is in a position to be able to manage significant funding or spending anomalies that may arise in the future (e.g. loss of a major funding partner, undertaking a major unplanned capital project).

D Business Processes Goals

To revitalize Business Processes we will . . .

D1 ***Hire a fund-raiser by the end of 2004***, whose primary function will be to enhance the CVWMA's fund development efforts, specifically in helping raise funds for the endowment fund.

D2 ***Maintain the program of annual Business Planning*** to transform strategies from the Strategic Plan as well as ongoing business activities into specific activity-oriented budget plans in order to clarify and make apparent future programs, activities and funding requirements and to be better able to link identified funding needs with fund development efforts.

D3 ***Maintain office technology*** for telecommunication, database capture and manipulation capabilities, and desktop publishing, to be able to better support expanded fund development, marketing, and public outreach programs.

Performance measures, Targets and Key Strategies

See Appendix A.

1.4 Alignment with government's strategic plan

The activities of the CVWMA are consistent with the strategic plan of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, and the government's strategic plan. The CVWMA is reaching towards financial self-sufficiency while safeguarding irreplaceable habitat and wildlife resources. It maintains the vast wetlands of the Kootenay River valley as wetland habitat – wetlands which would otherwise be lost due to changes in the regime of the Kootenay River resulting from the construction of hydroelectric dams on both sides of the international boundary. In doing so, it maintains the habitat essential to over 60 endangered species and the thousands of other species which depend on wetlands and their surroundings.

1.5 Summary financial outlook

See Appendix B.

Key forecast assumptions

• **Continuing support from BC Hydro** while implementing strategic plan for self-sufficiency

• **Public, government and granting agencies' continuing interest in wetlands and endangered species:**
Interest and concern for endangered species is growing. Legislation has been a hot topic. The CVWMA is well-positioned to explain and illustrate the link between survival of endangered species and healthy habitats, while remaining part of the solution.

• **Economy strong enough to support present (and increasing) level of giving:**
Negative economic news could reduce giving due to psychological factors. Economic factors include the softwood lumber tariff and adjustments arising therefrom. The impact of these changes on our clients is not directly measurable.

Forecast risks and sensitivities

• **Economic strength, especially in tourism and related industries:**
Since September 11, 2001, change has occurred in vacation and travel patterns, as noted by the Canadian Government Office of Tourism in its 2001 annual report. It is not possible to determine the exact impact of such changes on the Creston Valley and those who travel here or who may choose to do so.

• **Natural variations in climate:**
In wetland management, variations in snowpack, precipitation, and speed of runoff are constant variables. Dry years result in limited water for management activities. This accelerates the rate at which marshes fill in with vegetation and hastens the need for periodic "recycling" of compartments to rejuvenate vegetation and restore the wetland to productivity.

Amount and timing of runoff directly affect our costs for pumping in the Duck Lake Unit, to comply with the Order of the International Joint Commission on lake levels. In years with high and/or sudden runoff, additional costs are incurred and staff time is diverted from other activities.

Appendix A Goals, Objectives, Key Strategies, Performance Measures and Targets

Goals & Objectives	Strategies	Measures	Targets for fiscal years 2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Wildlife/habitat management goal: To maintain habitat and species diversity					
Re-establish regular ongoing program of active habitat management	Assess habitat and wildlife use of each unit to establish and prioritize habitat enhancement needs while paying particular attention to the needs of wetlands	Priority list developed/reviewed for habitat enhancement projects	•	•	•
		Wildlife & habitat management plan developed	•		
	Find granting agencies which will assist with funding habitat enhancement programs	Applications developed and submitted to potential funders	•	•	•
	Reintroduce habitat enhancement programs as funding becomes available	Hectares of habitat enhanced	200	180	200
Re-establish program for systematic monitoring of habitat, wildlife populations & human impact	Use aerial surveys as a primary means of measuring wildlife response to habitat changes	Number of aerial surveys conducted	1%	2%	2%
	Select a cost effective procedure for recording habitat changes	Implement technique for monitoring habitat changes	•	•	•
	Research and select cost effective equipment and procedures for monitoring human use for purposes of assessing human impact	Number of monitors installed	3	3	3
	Contract a biologist to assist with wildlife surveys, evaluation, and development of habitat management prescriptions	FTE's	0.25	0.50	0.75
Upgrade / replace aging habitat management infrastructure and equipment	Work with Ducks Unlimited, an existing partner, and seek out other partnerships to design and fund the infrastructure requirements	Secure funding / partnerships	•	•	•
		Upgrade or replace infrastructure components	•	•	•
Develop list of research priorities	List will be developed by a contract biologist and Area Manager and used in conjunction with other marketing material to encourage more research on the CVWMA	List of research subjects	•		
		Invitations issued to colleges and universities to conduct research	•	•	•
Public Outreach goal: To extend Public Outreach					
Increase visitation to Wildlife Centre to 13,500	Increase the information and entertainment value of programs and displays to promote visitor enjoyment and interest in the CVWMA	Number of visits to Wildlife Centre	11,000	12,000	13,500
	Maintain an effective curriculum based school program	Number of students visiting	1,500	1,500	1,500
	Enhance value & effectiveness of off-site information programs (marketing)	Pieces of newsletter/Annual Report distributed	11,400	11,400	11,400
Maintain a market research function	Research promising market segments and survey visitors to determine cost effectiveness of marketing programs	Record data on the amount spent per Wildlife Centre visitor for marketing	•	•	•
Make improvements to public facilities to ensure safety and enjoyment	Develop an attractive and cost effective design for major upgrade requirements that will be attractive to potential funders	Repair / replace boardwalk to Wildlife Centre	•		
	Re-examine the need for aging facilities with high maintenance requirements or look for more cost effective alternatives	Engineering assessment of suspension bridge	•		
		Engineering assessment of viewing tower		•	
Fund Development Goal: To enhance fund development					
Expand donor support from a donor base of 700 to 2,000 by the end of year 2005	Recruit new donors from visitors to the Wildlife Centre and reduce attrition of existing donors through implementation of attractive projects. Effectively communicate the value/s need for projects. Produce the highest possible value for each dollar contributed. Update and maintain effective donor recognition programs.	Size of donor base	1,320	1,670	2,000
Increase annual donations to $100,000 yr. by the end of year 2005	Increase number of donors and develop the confidence of donors through implementation of attractive projects and programs and effectively communicate the need for them. Produce highest possible value for each dollar contributed.	Annual memberships and donations to operations and Endowment Fund from quarterly publications, Wildlife Centre, and partnerships	61,800	78,400	100,000
Build the endowment fund to a total value of $5 million with an interim goal of $2 million by the end of year 2005	Promote the fund among donors and hold a major campaign that includes (by 2005): Buy an option to provide time to develop a donor base of sufficient size, hire a fund raiser, have a fund development committee in place, and to plan and find funding for a campaign	Size of endowment fund	212,500	563,000	2,000,000
Business Process Goal: To revitalize business process					
Establish volunteer Fund Development Committee	Hire a fund raiser to assist the CVWMA in its fund development efforts	Fund raiser hired		•	
Maintain program of annual business planning	Transform strategies into specific action plans and budgets	Budget/business plan prepared or modified	•	•	•
Maintain office technology	Maintain current technology for telecommunications, database capture/manipulation capability and desktop publishing capability	Identify & purchase product to replace	•	•	•

Appendix B Financial Outlook Summary

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
REVENUES			
Fund Development			
Grants	378,750	401,624	417,689
Endowment Fund	7,500	8,000	8,500
Donations for operations	20,000	22,200	24,200
	406,250	431,824	450,389
Public Outreach			
Wildlife Centre	41,000	42,000	43,000
Gift Shop	18,000	19,000	20,000
	59,000	61,000	63,000
Business Processes			
Operations	34,000	34,000	34,000
Interest	6,500	6,500	6,500
	40,500	40,500	40,500
TOTAL	505,750	533,324	553,889
EXPENDITURES			
Habitat/Wildlife Management	123,843	138,704	155,349
Public Outreach	260,407	270,620	272,040
Fund Development	27,000	28,000	29,000
Business Processes	87,000	88,000	89,000
Endowment Fund	7,500	8,000	8,500
TOTAL	505,750	533,324	553,889